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published in
European Journal of Social Psychology
2009

DOI (link to publisher)
10.1002/ejsp.571

document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

European Journal of Social Psychology
Eur. J. Soc. Psychol. **39**, 734–746 (2009)
Published online 20 September 2008 in Wiley InterScience
(www.interscience.wiley.com) **DOI**: 10.1002/ejsp.571

Attachment anxiety, intra-group (dis)respect, actual efforts, and group donation

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Abstract

The current study examines attachment-style differences in responses to inductions of group respect and disrespect. Participants completed a scale assessing attachment anxiety and avoidance, performed group tasks, and received high, average, or low respect feedback from group members. Then we assessed commitment to this group, actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group, and money donation to the group. For participants scoring relatively high on attachment anxiety, high group respect heightened group commitment and effort expenditure on behalf of the group, whereas group disrespect led to lower group commitment but to more money donation to the group and higher effort expenditure. Participants who scored relatively low on attachment anxiety were not significantly affected by group respect or disrespect. The implications of attachment theory for group dynamics were discussed. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980) to the field of group relationships (Rom & Mikulincer, 2003; Smith, Murphy, & Coats, 1999), while stressing the significance of examining group dynamics from both individual and group levels (Rom & Mikulincer, 2003). Rom and Mikulincer (2003) found that a person's attachment orientations (anxiety, avoidance) affect cognition, effect, and behavior during group interactions, and Smith et al. (1999) showed that variations along these attachment orientations underlie a person's identification with, and commitment to social groups. In the current study, we applied attachment theory to understand individual differences in the way people react to indicators of group respect and disrespect. At the same time, we examined the possible role that attachment orientations play in moderating effects of manipulations of group respect and disrespect on individual group commitment, actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group, and money donation to the group.

GROUP RESPECT AND BEHAVIOR ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP

The most prominent approach to intragroup respect and group-oriented behavior is the group-value theory (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996; Tyler & Lind, 1992). According to this theory, group interactions that lead people to feel respected as group members reinforce their commitment to the group and encourage them to spend effort on behalf of the group. Indeed, several studies have consistently documented these positive effects of group members' appraisals of group respect on their commitment to the group and actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group (Sleebos, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 2006a, 2006b, 2007).

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Received 9 April 2007
Accepted 1 August 2008

Following the same reasoning, proponents of the group-value theory (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Smith & Tyler, 1997) has also predicted that lack of group respect (or group disrespect) undermines psychological and behavioral involvement with a group and thus should result in reduced expenditure of effort on group tasks. However, studies on social exclusion and marginal group membership (e.g., Jetten, Branscombe, & Spears, 2002; Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995) suggest that lack of respect from other group members tends to motivate people to display behaviors that show their loyalty and worth to the group, thereby resulting in increased group commitment, heightened contribution to the achievement of group goals, and enhanced expenditure of effort in group tasks. In support of this view, Sleebos et al. (2006a) found that experimentally manipulated signals of high respect from other group members led participants to expend more efforts in group tasks than a control condition in which participants received signals of average group respect. Sleebos et al. (2006a) also found that group disrespect led to higher effort expenditure on behalf of the group. However, at the same time, they found that inductions of group disrespect had an opposite effect on group commitment and intentions to work with the group (more group disrespect, less willingness to work with a group). In fact, Sleebos et al.'s (2006a, 2006b) findings clearly indicated that, although disrespected individuals do not want to remain a member of the group that rejected them, they still expended more actual efforts on behalf of the group than people who received signals of average group respect.

Sleebos et al. (2006b) explained the observed effects of group disrespect in terms of the ''carrot'' and ''stick'' implications of group interactions. Beyond the social rewards that people can receive from group respect and acceptance (the carrot), the possibility of social sanctions and rejection implied by signals of disrespect by other group members (the stick) can also operate as a strong motivational force that leads people to expend actual efforts on behalf of the group. According to Sleebos et al. (2006b), the main motive underlying the heightened effort expenditure on behalf of the group of disrespected people is to re-assert their self-worth. In fact, there is consistent evidence that signals of group disrespect are associated with self-esteem damage and even physical pain (e.g., Smith, Tyler, Huo, Ortiz, & Lind, 1998; Tyler & Blader, 2001). Therefore, although being less committed to the group and less motivated to remain a member of the rejecting group, disrespected group members become concerned with their self-worth and may enhance actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group as a means for repairing the damaged self-esteem. Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (2002) also suggested that when people experience the threat of becoming a marginal group member (e.g., when they are disrespected), their need for self-affirmation is exacerbated. Enhanced effort expenditure on behalf of a group can then help to re-affirm their self-worth in the eyes of other group members.

In the current study, we want to build on and expand this line of research by examining the effects of individual differences in reactions to signals of group respect and disrespect. Although group disrespect is an aversive experience for every group member, the extent to which self-esteem is damaged by group disrespect and the compensatory expenditure of efforts on behalf of a group might depend on a person's susceptibility to signals of rejection and the strength and stability of his or her sense of self-worth. In our view, these individual differences can be interpreted in terms of attachment theory and might depend on a person's attachment insecurities, especially those related to attachment anxiety. Previous studies have shown that attachment anxiety makes a person more susceptible to signals of rejection and undermine the strength and stability of his or her self-esteem (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2005, 2007), which could be highly relevant for explaining reactions to signs of group respect and disrespect. That is, attachment anxiety seems to have direct linkages to the theoretical mechanism that group-value theory proposed to underlie the effects of group respect and disrespect. Therefore, the main goal of our study is to explore that mechanism by examining the impact of an individual different that directly captures the essence of this mechanism.

ATTACHMENT THEORY AND RESEARCH

One of the basic assumptions of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980) is that social interactions with significant others (called ''attachment figures'' in the theory) are internalized in the form of mental representations of self and relationship partners (''internal working models of self and others''). Such representations can have an impact on close relationships, self-esteem, emotion regulation, and mental health throughout life (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). To summarize the theory briefly, interactions with relationship partners who are available and supportive in times of need foster the development of both a sense of attachment security (''felt security''; Sroufe & Waters, 1977) and generally positive internal working models of the self and others. When attachment figures are rejecting or unavailable in times of

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

need, felt security is undermined, negative models of self and others are formed, and the likelihood of self-related doubts and emotional problems increases (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

When testing this theory in studies of adults, most researchers have focused on a person's attachment orientations—the systematic pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviors that results from a particular attachment history (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Research, beginning with Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) and continuing through recent studies by social and personality psychologists (reviewed by Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007), indicates that attachment orientations can be measured in terms of two orthogonal dimensions, attachment-related *anxiety* and *avoidance* (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). The first dimension, *attachment anxiety*, reflects the degree to which a person worries that a partner will not be available or adequately responsive in times of need. The second dimension, *avoidance*, reflects the extent to which he or she distrusts relationship partners' goodwill and strives to maintain autonomy and emotional distance from them. People who score low on both dimensions are said to be secure, or securely attached.

Although attachment theory is usually applied to explain people's cognitions, effect, and behavior in intimate or close relationships, this theoretical framework has been found to be highly relevant for understanding individual differences in group relationships. According to Rom and Mikulincer (2003), relationships with a group as a whole or other individual group members can fulfill the definitional criteria of attachment bonds. First, a group can be a target of proximity seeking—research clearly shows that people have a clear pattern of preference for their own group and that they seek for the proximity of other group members in times of need (see Devine, 1995; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1993; Tajfel, 1982 for reviews). Second, a group can be a source of support, comfort, and relief mainly during demanding or threatening situations (e.g., Hogg, 1992; Mullen & Cooper, 1994). Third, a group can facilitate exploration and learning of social, emotional, and cognitive skills (e.g., Forsyth, 1990). On this basis, one can apply attachment theory to group contexts and explore the extent to which attachment orientations affect cognition, effect, and behavior during group interactions.

In support of this view, Smith et al. (1999) found that people can develop feelings of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance toward a group. More importantly, higher scores on group-specific attachment anxiety or avoidance were related to lower identification with social groups, stronger negative emotions toward groups, and lower perceived support from groups. Rom and Mikulincer (2003) followed this line of research and found that global attachment anxiety in close relationships was associated with more negative representations of the self as a group member, higher appraisals of group interactions as a personal threat, more negative emotional reactions toward group interactions, higher endorsement of love/security goals (e.g., being loved and accepted by group members) during group interactions, and impaired instrumental functioning during group tasks. Findings also revealed that global attachment avoidance in close relationships was associated with more negative appraisals of group members and group interactions, higher endorsement of self-reliance goals during group interactions, and poor contribution to the promotion of closeness and consensus among group members. These findings clearly indicate that attachment theory is a useful and promising framework for explaining individual differences in group-related cognitions, effect, and behavior.

ATTACHMENT ANXIETY, SELF-ESTEEM, AND SELF-WORTH CONTINGENCIES

According to attachment theory, a sense of attachment security is associated with positive representations of the self as worthy and competent (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). During interactions with available, sensitive, and supportive attachment figures, people find it easy to perceive themselves as valuable, lovable, and special, thanks to being valued, loved, and regarded as special by caring attachment figures. Moreover, they learn to view themselves as active, strong, and competent because they can effectively mobilize an attachment figure's support and restore emotional equanimity thanks to the ''secure base'' (Bowlby, 1988) provided by this attachment figure. In contrast, lack of attachment figure's availability, sensitivity, and responsiveness and the resulting attachment insecurities can be sometimes associated with doubts about the degree to which the self is esteemed and loved by others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005, 2007).

Although both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance tend to be related to a less authentic, cohesive, and stable sense of self-worth, attachment theory and research (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Cassidy & Kobak, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002) suggest that each of these attachment dimensions result in different self-configurations. Whereas attachment avoidance is linked with a defensive facade of self-worth and dismissal

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

of signals of interpersonal rejection or disrespect, attachment anxiety is associated with relatively low levels of self-esteem and susceptibility to minimal signs of respect and disrespect from others (e.g., Brennan & Morris, 1997; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997; Mikulincer, 1995; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007).

There is also extensive evidence linking attachment anxiety with a tendency to base self-views on unstable sources of worth, such as dependence on others' acceptance and approval (Andersson & Perris, 2000; Park, Crocker, & Mickelson, 2004). Moreover, attachment anxiety is inversely associated with tendencies to base self-worth on domains that do not require constant external validation such as long-term family support. In line with attachment theory, attachment avoidance is associated with less dependence on interpersonal sources of self-esteem (Park et al., 2004).

The link between attachment anxiety and a tendency to derive self-worth from others' reactions has been further documented in Srivastava and Beer's (2005) naturalistic study of group interactions. In this study, participants took part in four weekly small-group meetings and, following each group session, rated their own likeability, and the extent to which they liked each other person in the group. Findings revealed that participants who were more liked by others following a particular group session had more positive self-evaluations in a later session. However, this dependence on others' liking was mainly found among participants scoring high on the dimension of attachment anxiety. For participants scoring relatively low on this dimension, overall self-evaluations were quite high and relatively unaffected by what other members of the group thought. These findings were conceptually replicated by Broemer and Blumle (2003) in laboratory experiments examining a person's reactions to positive and negative self-relevant feedback.

THE CURRENT STUDY

In the current study, we want to examine whether the link between attachment anxiety and the tendency to derive self-worth from others' reactions is manifested in the ways people react to signs of group respect and disrespect. Specifically, participants completed a self-report scale tapping attachment anxiety and avoidance, after which they were assigned to a small group and asked to interact with three group members. They were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions according to the level of respect they received from other group members: high, average, and low. Following this experimental manipulation, participants reported on their commitment to the group and group-related worries (worries concerning acceptance and approval by other group members)—which Sleebos et al. (2006a, 2006b) refer to as *acceptance anxiety*. In addition, we assessed actual behaviors on behalf of the group in two different ways. First, we asked participants to decide about the amount of money they would donate to the group. Second, we measured actual, more mandatory effort expenditure in a group task. In this way, we assessed how high and low respect inductions, as compared to the average respect condition, affect participants' group commitment, group-related worries, money donation to the group, and actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group, and examined whether attachment anxiety moderates these effects.

In applying attachment theory and research to explain the ways people react to inductions of group respect and disrespect, we assume that variations along the attachment anxiety dimension would determine the extent to which these inductions would affect group commitment and actual behavior on behalf of the group. Specifically, attachment anxiety has been found to be associated with a tendency to base the sense of self-worth on others' love and acceptance, dependence on continual validation from others, and susceptibility to others' positive and negative reactions. As a result, inductions of group respect can lead people scoring relatively high on attachment anxiety to feel appreciated and valued, can temporarily pacify their chronic self-doubts, and can then enhance group commitment, actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group, and money donation to the group. Group disrespect can remind people scoring relatively high on attachment anxiety of their self-perceived worthlessness, strengthen self-relevant worries, and then can lead them to react in the way observed by Sleebos et al. (2006a, 2006b): reduced commitment to the rejecting group together with heightened effort expenditure on behalf of the group and more money donation to the group. Lower scores along the attachment anxiety dimension would weaken these effects of group respect and disrespect.

In our view, attachment avoidance would weaken the effects of inductions of group respect or disrespect on commitment and actual behavior on behalf of the group. Attachment avoidance is associated with dismissal of others' feedback and others' approval, and a tendency to suppress distressing thoughts and repress painful emotions (e.g., Fraley & Shaver, 1997). On this basis, we predicted that attachment anxiety but not avoidance would moderate the effects of

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

group respect and disrespect on group commitment, group-related worries, and actual behavior on behalf of the group. Our predictions are:

(1) As compared to an average group respect condition, inductions of high group respect would lead to higher group commitment, more money donation to a group, and higher effort expenditure on behalf of the group among participants scoring relatively high on attachment anxiety, but not among participants scoring relatively low on attachment anxiety.
(2) As compared to an average group respect condition, inductions of low group respect would lead to higher levels of group-related worries and lower group commitment but more money donation to a group, and higher effort expenditure on behalf of the group among participants scoring relatively high on attachment anxiety, but not among participants scoring relatively low on attachment anxiety.

METHOD

Participants

One hundred ninety-eight Dutch students from Leiden University (137 women and 61 men, ranging in age from 18 to 31, median = 21) participated in the experiment. The duration of the experiment was 50 minutes, for which they received 4.5 Euro. Participants were randomly assigned to three experimental conditions, with 66 participants in each condition.

Materials and Procedure

Participants were invited to the laboratory to participate in a study on how people work in task-groups. Participants (eight students per session) were seated in separate cubicles, containing a computer with a monitor and a keyboard, and they were told that they could communicate with each other by means of the computer network. Computers were used to provide instructions and collect participants' responses.

In the first stage of the experiment, participants completed a battery of self-report scales and were explained that these scales tap attitudes and cognitions relevant to interpersonal relationships and group interactions. Among these scales, participants completed the Dutch version of the Experiences in Close Relationships scale (ECR; Brennan et al., 1998) in order to assess self-reports of attachment-related anxiety and avoidance. Participants were asked to think about their close relationships, without focusing on a specific partner, and to rate the extent to which each item accurately described their feelings in close relationships, using a 7-point scale ranging from ''not at all'' (1) to ''very much'' (7). Eighteen items tapped attachment anxiety (e.g., ''I worry about being abandoned,'' ''I worry a lot about my relationships'') and 18 items tapped avoidance (e.g., ''I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down,'' ''I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close''). The reliability and construct validity of the two subscales have been demonstrated in a wide variety of samples and in different languages (e.g., Brennan et al., 1998; Mikulincer & Florian, 2000). In our sample, Cronbach's α were acceptable for the 18 anxiety items (.85) and the 18 avoidance items (.90). Two scores were then computed by averaging items on each subscale, with higher scores reflecting higher attachment-related anxiety and avoidance, respectively. These two scores were not significantly associated, $r\,(196) = .13$, supporting Brennan et al.'s (1998) claims about the orthogonality of anxiety and avoidance dimensions.

Following the ECR scale, participants were told a cover story, explaining that this was a study of team collaboration in financial organizations. A bogus personality test followed, which allegedly allowed the experimenter to assign the session-participants to two four-person teams according to their problem-solving style (Noel et al., 1995). In reality, all participants were told that they were holistic-focused problem solvers and they received pre-programmed information that simulated the alleged responses of other members of their team.

Next, each participant was asked to provide some personal information by typing brief descriptions on the computer, ostensibly for the purpose of getting to know each other better (Branscombe et al., 2002; Sleebos et al., 2006a). Specifically, participants were asked to recall and describe an experience of personal success in school or work settings

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

that they were proud of and an experience of personal failure in the same settings that they were ashamed of. In a similar vein, they were asked to recall and describe an experience of successful team performance of which they were proud and an experience of unsuccessful team performance of which they were ashamed (Sleebos et al., 2006a, 2006b). Subsequently, participants were asked to rate the respect they felt toward each of the three fellow in-group members on a 9-point scale (1 = *little respect*, 9 = *great respect*), based on the experiential descriptions each of them had ostensibly provided. Actually, all participants received standardized, preprogrammed descriptions, containing behavioral episodes that had been rated equally positive (e.g., ''At work, somebody had a stroke and I applied first aid'') or equally negative (e.g., ''I failed my driving license test three times in a row'') in a pilot study (Sleebos et al., 2006a). Participants were led to believe that each of the three fellow in-group members was evaluating them based on the experiential descriptions they provided.

Respect feedback from one's team members was manipulated by informing participants about the average respect scores they had supposedly received from the other three fellow in-group members. In the low respect condition, participants were informed that, on average, the other three in-group members had rated them lower (4.3) than the neutral point (6) and that their score was lower than the respect scores that the other three in-group members had received (which were stated to be 6, 5.3, and 6.7, respectively). In the average respect condition, participants were informed that, on average, the other three in-group members had rated them equal (6) to the neutral point (6) and that their respect score was quite similar to the respect scores the other three in-group members had received (which were stated to be 6, 5.3, and 6.7, respectively). In the high respect conditions, participants were informed that their average respect score was higher (7.7) than the neutral point (6) and higher than the respect scores that the other three in-group members had received (which were stated to be 6, 5.3, and 6.7, respectively).

Following this experimental manipulation, participants received a self-report questionnaire and they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each item. Ratings were given on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*very much*). To check the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation, participants received three items tapping the extent to which they thought that team members respected them (e.g., ''to what extent do you think your fellow group members respect you for your individual achievements?''). Cronbach's α for these items was high (.95), allowing us to compute a total score of perceived group respect by averaging the three items.

The questionnaire also included items tapping group commitment and group-related attachment worries. *Group commitment* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$) was measured with seven items, adapted from Ellemers, De Gilder, & Van den Heuvel, (1998) scale, focusing on the affective commitment participants felt toward their current team (e.g., ''I feel at home among my fellow group members in my task-group''). *Group-related worries* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .76$) was assessed with four items, adapted from Smith et al.'s (1999) Social Group Attachment scale, tapping the extent to which participants currently felt that they were unworthy as a group member and experienced worries and concerns regarding acceptance by the other three in-group members (e.g., ''I worry that my group does not really accept me''). We computed two total scores for each participant by averaging the relevant items in each subscale. Higher scores reflected higher group commitment and higher group-related worries.

After completing the questionnaire, participants were invited to work on a group task that served to assess participants' actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group. Participants were told that only their collective performance as a team would be scored (e.g., the average time that took for all the four team members to complete the task), and that no information would be provided about their individual performance. Then, they performed a *speed effort task*, which was presented as ''a simplified version of the work employees in financial organizations do,'' and participants were asked to enter four rounds of 30 numbers, each containing three-digits at the highest possible *speed*. In this task, for each participant we computed the time they took to complete the task. The less time a participant took to complete the task (higher performance speed), the greater the effort he or she spent on the task and the greater his or her contribution to team performance.

Upon completion of this task, we collected data on participants' willingness to contribute to their current group. Specifically, participants were given a few options for using a potential sum of money (10 Euros), which they might earn in a lottery between all participants. Participants received the following instructions: ''If you win the money, would you (a) keep the money for yourself, (b) share the money with your own task-group, (c) donate the money to UNICEF, (d) keep half of the money for yourself and share the other half with your own task-group, or (e) keep half of the money for yourself and donate the other half to UNICEF.'' Participants were asked to decide what they want to do with the 10 Euros by choosing one of the five given options. On this basis, we computed for each participant a *group donation* score by assigning

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a score of 2 to participants who chose to share all the money with their group (option b), a score of 1 to participants who chose to share half of the money with their group (option d), and a score of 0 to participants who chose one of the remaining options.[1] Upon choosing an option, participants were told that the experiment had finished and they were paid and debriefed.

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

In order to examine whether the experimental manipulations were effective in producing feelings of respect/disrespect, we performed one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) examining the effects of respect induction (low, average, high) on the manipulation check measure. As expected, a significant main effect for respect manipulation was found on the manipulation check measure, $F\ (2,\ 195) = 374.66$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .79$. Scheffe post-hoc tests ($\alpha = .05$) revealed that participants in the high respect condition were more likely to think they were more respected ($M = 5.65$, SD = 0.70) than participants in the average respect condition ($M = 4.60$, SD = 0.55), who, in turn, were more likely to believe in group members' respect than participants in the low respect condition ($M = 2.66$, SD = 0.65).

Attachment Orientations and Responses to Group Respect and Disrespect

In order to examine our predictions concerning the contribution of attachment insecurities (anxiety, avoidance) to a person's responses to inductions of group respect and disrespect, we conducted a series of hierarchical regressions for the study-dependent variables (self-reports of group commitment and group-related worries, donation of money to the group, effort expenditure on behalf of the group). For these regressions, we computed two dummy variables: one contrasting high respect (1) to the average (0) and low conditions (0) and the other contrasting low respect (1) to the average (0) and high conditions (0). By introducing these two dummy variables simultaneously into a regression model, we compared group respect and group disrespect to the average (control) respect condition. Then, at the first step of these regressions, we included the main effects of group respect, group disrespect, attachment anxiety, and attachment avoidance. Following Aiken and West's (1991) recommendation, attachment scores were centered in relation to their mean. In the second step, we examined the two-way interactions between each of the two manipulated variables (group respect, group disrespect) and each attachment dimension (a total of four interactive terms).

For self-reports of group commitment, the regression revealed significant unique effects for respect induction and attachment anxiety (see Betas in Table 1). As expected, participants in the high respect condition reported higher commitment to their group than participants in the moderate respect condition. In addition, the higher a participants' attachment anxiety, the lower the reports of group commitment. The main effect for disrespect induction approximated statistical significance. In line with Sleebos et al.'s (2006a, 2006b) findings, participants in the low respect condition reported lower group commitment than participants in the moderate respect condition (see Table 1). However, these effects were qualified by significant interactions for respect induction × attachment anxiety and disrespect induction × attach-attachment anxiety (see Table 1).

Simple slope analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) revealed that the effects of inductions of group respect and disrespect on group commitment were moderated by attachment anxiety. When attachment anxiety was relatively high (+1 SD), the respect induction (high vs. moderate respect conditions) produced a significant increase in group commitment, $b = .41$, $p < .01$, whereas the disrespect induction (low vs. moderate respect conditions) produced a significant decrease in group commitment, $b = -.39$, $p < .01$. These effects of respect and disrespect inductions were not significant when attachment

[1]The UNICEF option was used as a filler/distracting option. However, we also computed for each participant a UNICEF donation score by assigning a score of 2 to participants who chose to donate all the money to UNICEF, a score of 1 to participants who chose to donate half of the money to UNICEF, and a score of 0 to participants who chose one of the remaining options. Statistical analyses revealed no significant unique and interactive effect of respect inductions, attachment anxiety, and attachment avoidance on the UNICEF donation score.

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

Table 1. Standardized regression coefficients and significance tests of the prediction of self-report measures according to attachment scores and respect manipulations

Effects	Group commitment	Group-related worries
Step 1		
Group respect	.19*	−.01
Group disrespect	−.14	.32**
Attachment anxiety	−.24**	.35**
Attachment avoidance	−.03	−.06
Step 2		
Anxiety × respect	.22*	−.10
Avoidance × respect	−.03	.08
Anxiety × disrespect	−.25*	−.07
Avoidance × disrespect	.15	−.18*
F (8, 197)	8.26**	8.95**
R^2 (%)	25.8	27.4

Notes: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

anxiety was relatively low (−1 SD), *b*s of −.03 and .11. In line with our predictions, attachment anxiety intensified the effects that inductions of group respect and disrespect had on reports of group commitment.

The regression performed on group-related worries revealed significant unique effects for disrespect induction and attachment anxiety (see Table 1). Participants in the low respect condition reported higher group-related worries than participants in the moderate respect condition. In addition, the higher a participants' attachment anxiety, the higher the reports of group-related worries. Interestingly, the regression also revealed a significant interaction between disrespect induction and attachment avoidance (see Table 2). Simple slope analyses revealed that when attachment avoidance was relatively low (−1 SD), the disrespect induction (low vs. moderate respect conditions) produced a significant increase in group-related worries, $b = .50$, $p < .01$. This effect of disrespect induction was not significant when attachment avoidance was relatively high (+1 SD), $b = .14$. That is, attachment avoidance seemed to buffer the increase in group-related worries that the disrespect induction produced.

For effort expenditure in the speed task, the regression revealed a significant unique effect for attachment anxiety (see Table 2): The higher a participants' attachment anxiety, the faster the completion of the task (higher effort expenditure). However, this effect was moderated by two significant interactions: respect induction × attachment anxiety and disrespect induction × attachment anxiety (see Table 2). Simple slope analyses revealed that when attachment anxiety was relatively low (−1 SD), both respect and disrespect inductions produced a significant increase in the time it took for a participant to

Table 2. Standardized regression coefficients for group donation and effort expenditure and persistence in group tasks according to attachment scores and respect manipulations

Effects	Effort expenditure in the speed task[a]	Money donation to the group
Step 1		
Group respect	.02	.06
Group disrespect	.04	.06
Attachment anxiety	−.20*	.15*
Attachment avoidance	.03	−.04
Step 2		
Anxiety × respect	−.23*	−.11
Avoidance × respect	.02	.16
Anxiety × disrespect	−.29*	.25*
Avoidance × disrespect	−.01	.12
F (8, 197)	2.43*	3.35*
R^2 (%)	9.3	12.4

Notes: *$p < .05$;; **$p < .01$.; [a]Lower scores in 'Effort Expenditure' mean less time needed for the task and, thus, higher effort.

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

complete the task, *b*s of .25 and .31, *p*s $< .05$. However, when attachment anxiety was relatively high (+1 SD), both respect and disrespect inductions led to faster completion of the task, *b*s of $-.19$ and $-.25$, *p*s $< .05$. As predicted, respect and disrespect inductions increased effort expenditure (faster task completion) among participants who scored relatively high on attachment anxiety. However, these inductions reduced effort expenditure (longer time to complete the task) among participants who were relatively low in attachment anxiety.

The regression performed on money donation to the group revealed a significant unique effect for attachment anxiety (see Table 2): the higher a participants' attachment anxiety, the higher the amount of money donated to the group. However, this effect was moderated by a significant interaction between disrespect induction and attachment anxiety (see Table 2). Simple slope analyses revealed that when attachment anxiety was relatively high (+1 SD), the disrespect induction (low vs. moderate respect conditions) produced a significant increase in money donation to the group, $b = .31$, $p < .01$. This effect of disrespect induction was not significant when attachment anxiety was relatively low (-1 SD), $b = -.18$. Fitting our prediction, an induction of group disrespect increased donation of money to a group mainly among highly attachment-anxious participants. All the other effects, including those comparing high versus moderate respect conditions, were not significant.

DISCUSSION

The main goal of the current study was to apply attachment theory to the study of small group dynamics and to provide a better understanding of individual differences in the ways people react to signals of respect and disrespect from other group members. Previous studies have found that attachment theory is a relevant framework for exploring individual differences in the context of group interactions (e.g., Rom & Mikulincer, 2003; Smith et al., 1999). In our study, we used this framework as a prism for inquiring about the effects of perceived group respect on group commitment and pro-group behavior. Overall, the findings clearly indicate that variations along the attachment anxiety dimension are relevant for explaining individual differences in group commitment and expenditure of actual effort on behalf of the group following inductions of group respect and disrespect.

Our findings indicated that attachment anxiety intensified the effects of inductions of both group respect and disrespect. Specifically, an induction of group respect led to higher reports of group commitment and more effort expenditure on behalf of the group mainly among participants scoring high on the attachment anxiety ECR subscale. No significant effect of group respect feedback was found when attachment anxiety was relatively low. These findings might be a reflection of the link between attachment anxiety, on the one hand, and hyper-sensitivity to signs of social approval and over-dependence on external sources of self-worth, on the other (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005, 2007). When feeling accepted and loved by their group, people scoring relatively high on attachment anxiety may feel so grateful to the group for its approval and acceptance that they may strengthen their commitment to the group and may spend a lot of effort on behalf of the group.

The question here is how persistent these pro-group responses are? Although we have collected no data on this issue, one can speculate that if these responses are driven by anxiously attached people's strong motives of social approval and self-relevant doubts, such a pro-group orientation might disappear as time elapsed from the group respect feedback and no further positive feedback is given. In this case, chronic self-related doubts might return and interfere with pro-group responses. However, one should note that this is only a post-hoc speculation. Further research is needed to test these ideas using prospective designs and assessing the mediating role of social approval motives and self-relevant worries.

Attachment anxiety also moderated the effects of group disrespect feedback on pro-group responses. An induction of group disrespect led to lower group commitment, more money donation to the group, and higher actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group among participants scoring high on attachment anxiety but not when attachment anxiety was relatively low. That is, attachment anxiety was associated with an intensification of real, concrete effort expenditure on behalf of the group after an induction of group disrespect despite self-reports of low commitment to the group. It seems that group members scoring relatively high on attachment anxiety reacted to the disrespect feedback with serious doubts about their commitment to the group. However, probably, their strong need for others' love and self-related worries might impel them to increase their contribution to the group (more money donation) and to invest more actual efforts on behalf of the group as a means for repairing the damaged sense of self-worth. Again, one should note that we did not collect data on

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

the extent to which group disrespect feedback augmented social approval motives or self-relevant worries. Further research should directly assess these variables after group disrespect feedback and examine the extent to which they mediated the effects of attachment anxiety on pro-group responses.

Following this line of reasoning, it is possible that attachment anxiety is associated with a tendency to continue to invest in a rejecting group to feel better about oneself. According to Schroeder, Penner, Dovidio, and Piliavin (1995), these affective reactions can lead to helping and pro-social behavior primarily because the person believe that helping will make him or her feel better by eliminating the negative mood or producing some rewarding outcomes.

Findings also indicated that attachment anxiety and group disrespect feedback had significant unique effects on group-related worries. Fitting Sleebos et al.'s (2006a, 2006b) findings, group disrespect feedback, as compared to the control condition, augmented group-related worries. Moreover, fitting Rom and Mikulincer's (2003) findings, attachment anxiety was associated with higher levels of group-related worries regardless of the group feedback participants received. However, it is important to note that, although attachment anxiety moderated the effects of group disrespect feedback on pro-group responses, it failed to moderate the effects of such a feedback on group-related worries. That is, the findings revealed no significant interactive effect for attachment anxiety and group disrespect on group-related worries. Moreover, additional regression analyses revealed that group-related worries did not significantly mediate the interactive effects of attachment anxiety and group disrespect on pro-group responses. Further research should attempt to examine more systematically the role group-related worries play in shaping a person's reactions to group disrespect and the specific kinds of worries that can mediate the effects of attachment anxiety on these reactions.

With regard to attachment avoidance, findings revealed that this attachment dimension was not significantly associated with reports of group commitment and actual behaviors on behalf of the group and did not moderate the effects of inductions of group respect or disrespect. Attachment avoidance was only found to weaken the effects of induced group disrespect on group-related worries. Specifically, whereas participants scoring relatively low on the attachment avoidance ECR subscale reacted to group disrespect with heightened worries about being accepted and valued by their group, those scoring relatively high on avoidance showed no significant increase in group-related worries following the induction of group disrespect. That is, attachment avoidance seemed to counteract the activation of group-related worries produced by group disrespect.

This finding fits well with the already observed links between attachment avoidance and defensive tendencies to maintain a facade of self-worth and to dismiss any signal of interpersonal rejection (see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007, for a review). That is, attachment avoidance seems to be an effective strategy to protect the self from others' evaluation. However, one should note that we have assessed explicit manifestations of group-related worries, which can be easily affected by avoidant defenses. Perhaps the assessment of more implicit manifestations of these worries would still reveal the negative emotional and cognitive impact that group disrespect might have even among people scoring relatively high on attachment avoidance. In addition, it is also possible that the distress caused by our induction of group disrespect was not so strong, thereby allowing dismissal of the worries it can cause. Probably, more personally relevant instances of group disrespect can shatter defensive facades of self-worth and elicit heightened group-related worries even among people scoring relatively high on attachment avoidance.

Beyond the observed effects of attachment orientations, one should note that the current findings can lead to further specification and elaboration of group value theory (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000). Individual differences in attachment anxiety might serve as an important moderator of the processes advanced by the group value model. Without taking into account individual variations along the attachment anxiety dimension, the induction of high group respect only led to the predicted increase in group commitment, but no increased effort expenditure in a subsequent group task was visible. Likewise, findings concerning the induction of group disrespect were significantly moderated by attachment anxiety.

The findings also contribute to attachment theory. First, they further expand attachment theory to explain individual differences in group-related cognitions, effect, and behavior. Second, they suggest that group feedback can in the long run contribute to the stability or change in attachment anxiety. On the one hand, signs of group disrespect, criticism, and rejection may further exacerbate self-related doubts and then serve as a mechanism that perpetuates attachment anxiety. On the another hand, repeated signs of group respect and approval may in the long run weaken self-related doubts and then act as a source of change in attachment anxiety. Specifically, one can speculate that that the higher commitment and effort in behalf of a group showed by anxiously attached people following a group respect feedback might trigger repeated signs of respect in a group, which in turn might weaken self-relevant worries and interpersonal anxieties. Further research

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should examine whether and how group respect and approval can reduce attachment anxiety in the long run and then construct group interventions aimed at increasing a person's attachment security.

Before ending this discussion, we want to note some limitations of the current study. First, following inductions of group respect or disrespect, we assessed participants' effort expenditure on behalf of the group. However, we did not give participants the opportunity to work ''for themselves'' or on behalf of another, alternative group. Therefore, we cannot be sure whether the current findings indicate variations in effort expenditure on behalf of a specific group or non-specific investment in task performance. Further research should examine effects of group respect and disrespect on task performance that is irrelevant to the accepting/rejecting group. Second, it is important to note that our explanation of the link between attachment anxiety and reactions to inductions of group respect and disrespect involves variations in self-esteem. However, we did not assess situational self-esteem and then could not examine the mediating role of changes in self-esteem during the experimental session. Further research should systematically assess variations in participants' self-esteem following inductions of group respect and disrespect and examine whether these variations are related to investment in the group and whether they can explain the observed effects of attachment anxiety. Third, participants completed the ECR scale immediately before the experimental manipulation, probably making interpersonal relationships salient during the group interaction. Further research should attempt to replicate the current findings while assessing attachment orientations several days or weeks before the experimental manipulations.

In addition, previous research on group respect has mainly focused on discretionary forms of efforts, as these efforts were argued to be more influenced by respect (e.g., Tyler & Blader, 2002). In the current study, we assessed performance on a speed task, a more mandatory form of effort (participant had to fulfill the task) that can be less affected by inductions of group respect or disrespect (however, Sleebos et al., 2006b, Study 1, found significant effects of group respect on a speed task). Therefore, it is not surprising that we did not find a main effect for respect inductions on the speed task, and that these inductions affected task performance only under particular circumstances (when people scored high on attachment anxiety). Further research should attempt to replicate our findings while using a less mandatory form of effort expenditure.

Our research has emphasized the importance of attachment theory for exploring *individual differences* in the context of group behavior. We showed that feelings of belongingness to the group and engagement in group serving efforts following signals of group respect and disrespect are highly dependent on a person's attachment anxiety. Further research should attempt to explore these effects in real-life groups and examine whether more personally relevant feedback concerning group respect and disrespect can override the observed individual differences and lead even people scoring low on attachment anxiety to react to the pressure exerted by group feedback. Further research should also examine the conditions which might either lead people scoring relatively high on attachment anxiety to take distance from a rejecting group or make them try to be accepted and valued by such a group.

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DOI: 10.1002/ejsp